

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of dispensing a self-authenticating media useable in transferring credits from a first gaming machine to a second gaming machine, comprising the steps of:

determining a cashout value in response to a cashout command;

5 recording a visible manifestation representing information comprising the cashout value on a media;

recording a magnetic manifestation representing the information on the media;

and

dispensing the media from the first gaming machine.

10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the magnetic manifestation of the information is continuously variable.

15 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the visible manifestation of the information is recorded on a heat-sensitive top surface of the self-authenticating media.

20 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the magnetic manifestation of the information is recorded on a magnetic media portion embedded between a bottom surface of the media and a top surface of the media.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the magnetic media portion is substantially undetectable by a reflective optical sensor and substantially detectable by a densometric sensor.

25 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the visible manifestation and the magnetic manifestation of the information are recorded in the same area of the media.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

determining that one of the manifestations of the information on the media has failed to be recorded, the manifestation selected from the visible manifestation and the magnetic manifestation; and

5 determining the cashout value from the recorded manifestation of the information.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the visibly and magnetically manifested information is encrypted according to a first encryption key.

10 9. The method of claim 8, wherein:

the first encryption key is a temporally-dependent encryption key computed in the first gaming device according to a first real time clock accessible to the first gaming device.

15 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising the steps of:

accepting the media in the second gaming machine;

confirming the authenticity of the media; and

issuing credits equivalent to the cashout value after the authenticity of the media is confirmed.

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11. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of confirming the authenticity of the media comprises the steps of:

reading the visible and magnetic manifestations of the information from the media;

25 decrypting the information from the visible manifestation and the magnetic manifestation; and

confirming the authenticity of the media if the information from the visible manifestation and the magnetic manifestation are comparable.

determining a temporally-dependent first encryption key computed in the second gaming device according to a second real time clock accessible to the second gaming device; and

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising the steps of:
determining a second encryption key temporally preceding the first encryption key
and a third encryption key temporally following the first encryption key using the second
real time clock; and

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the second encryption key immediately precedes the first encryption key and the third encryption key immediately precedes the second encryption key.

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16. The method of claim 15, further comprising the steps of:
determining the approximate time the media was inserted into the second gaming
device; and

determining if the media has expired using the time recorded on the media and the
5 time the media was inserted into the second gaming device; and

if the media has not expired, selecting a second encryption key preceding the first
encryption key and a third encryption key following the first encryption key according to
the time of day recorded on the media, and decrypting the information using the second
encryption key and the third encryption key if the information cannot be decrypted using
10 the first encryption key.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the information further comprises an
identification of the first gaming device.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the information further comprises a theft
code.

19. A self-authenticating media useable in transferring credits from a first
gaming machine to a second gaming machine, comprising:

20 a bottom surface, suitable for application of print media;

a heat-sensitive top surface, suitable for manifesting printed media by a thermal
printer;

a continuous magnetic media portion, embedded within the media between the
bottom surface and the top surface, the magnetic media portion suitable for recording,
25 playing back, and erasing a continuously variable magnetic field by a magnetic head;

wherein the magnetic media portion is substantially undetectable by reflective
optical sensors and substantially detectable by densometric optical sensor.

20. The media of claim 19, wherein the magnetic media portion comprises a
30 polyethelene stripe having magnetizable particles.

21. The media of claim 19, wherein the magnetic media portion comprises a magnetic track.

5 22. The media of claim 19, wherein the bottom surface comprises pre-printed information.

23. The media of claim 19, wherein the media is of substantially the same dimension as currency so as to be acceptable within a currency acceptor .

10 24. The media of claim 19, wherein the currency acceptor comprises a magnetic head for reading magnetic patterns manifested by magnetic ink printed on the currency, and wherein the magnetic media portion is disposed within the media so as to be readable by the magnetic head.

15 25. The media of claim 19, further comprising:
a visible manifestation disposed on the top surface, representing information comprising a media cashout value;
a magnetic manifestation on the magnetic media portion, representing the
20 information.

26. The media of claim 25, wherein the information representing the media cashout value is encrypted.

25 27. The media of claim 26, wherein the visible manifestation and the magnetic manifestation representing the information are at least partially redundant.

28. The media of claim 1, wherein the visible manifestation and the magnetic manifestation are disposed in the same area of the media.

29. The media of claim 19, wherein the magnetic media portion is substantially undetectable by a reflective optical sensor and substantially detectable by a densometric optical sensor.

5 30. An apparatus for dispensing and receiving a self-authenticating media usable in transferring credits from a first gaming machine to a second gaming machine, comprising:

a printing device for applying printed media to a heat sensitive top surface of the self-authenticating media;

10 a processor, communicatively coupled to the printing device and a memory;

a magnetic head; and

a magnetic media subsystem communicatively coupled to the processor and the magnetic head, the magnetic media subsystem selectably configurable to authenticate currency via magnetic ink printed on the currency and to read a magnetic manifestation representing information comprising a cashout value on a re-recordable continuous magnetic media portion embedded within the self-authenticating media.

15 31. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the magnetic manifestation is continuously variable.

20 32. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the visible manifestation of the information is recorded on the top surface of the self-authenticating media.

25 33. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the apparatus further comprises:
a reflective optical sensor, communicatively coupled to the processor, for reading a visible manifestation representing information comprising a cashout value on the media.

34. The apparatus of claim 33, wherein the apparatus further comprises a densometric optical sensor, and the magnetic media portion is substantially undetectable by the reflective optical sensor and substantially detectable by the densometric optical sensor.

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35. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the visible manifestation and the magnetic manifestation of the information are disposed in the same area of the media.

36. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the visibly and magnetically manifested information is encrypted according to a first encryption key.

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37. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein:
the apparatus further comprises a real time clock; and
the first encryption key is temporally selected from an ordered series of encryption keys computed according to the real time clock.

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38. The apparatus of claim 37, further comprising decryption module having a plurality of instructions stored in the memory for instructing the processor to decrypt the information to confirm the authenticity of the media.

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39. An apparatus for dispensing a self-authenticating media useable in transferring credits from a first gaming machine to a second gaming machine, comprising:

means for determining a cashout value in response to a cashout command;
means for recording a visible manifestation representing information comprising the cashout value on a media; and
means for recording a magnetic manifestation representing the information on the media; and
means for dispensing the media from the first gaming machine.

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40. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the magnetic manifestation of the information is continuously variable.

41. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the visible manifestation of the information is recorded on a heat-sensitive top surface of the self-authenticating media.

42. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the magnetic manifestation of the information is recorded on a magnetic media portion embedded between a bottom surface of the media and a top surface of the media.

43. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the magnetic media portion is substantially undetectable by a reflective optical sensor and substantially detectable by a densometric sensor.

44. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the visible manifestation and the magnetic manifestation of the information are recorded in the same area of the media.

45. The apparatus of claim 39, further comprising:
means for determining that one of the manifestations of the information on the media has failed to be recorded, the manifestation selected from the visible manifestation and the magnetic manifestation; and
means for determining the cashout value from the recorded manifestation of the information.

46. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the visibly and magnetically manifested information is encrypted according to a first encryption key.

47. The apparatus of claim 46, wherein:
the first encryption key is a temporally-dependent encryption key computed in the first gaming device according to a first real time clock accessible to the first gaming device.

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48. The apparatus of claim 47, further comprising:
means for accepting the media in the second gaming machine;
means for confirming the authenticity of the media; and
means for issuing credits equivalent to the cashout value after the authenticity of
10 the media is confirmed.

49. The apparatus of claim 48, wherein the means for confirming the authenticity of the media comprises:
means for reading the visible and magnetic manifestations of the information from
15 the media;
means for decrypting the information from the visible manifestation and the magnetic manifestation; and
means for confirming the authenticity of the media if the information from the visible manifestation and the magnetic manifestation are comparable.

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50. The apparatus of claim 49, wherein the means for decrypting the information comprises:
means for determining a temporally-dependent first encryption key computed in the second gaming device according to a second real time clock accessible to the second
25 gaming device; and
means for decrypting the information using the first encryption key.

51. The apparatus of claim 49, further comprising:
means for selecting a second encryption key temporally preceding the first
encryption key and a third encryption key temporally following the first encryption key;
and

5 means for decrypting the information using the second encryption key and the
third encryption key if the information cannot be decrypted using the first encryption key.

52. The apparatus of claim 51, wherein the second encryption key immediately
precedes the first encryption key and the third encryption key immediately precedes the
10 second encryption key.

53. The apparatus of claim 51, wherein the information recorded in the visible
manifestation and the magnetic manifestation further comprises an approximate time that
the media is dispensed from the first gaming machine.

15 54. The apparatus of claim 53, further comprising:
means for determining the approximate time the media was inserted into the
second gaming device; and
means for determining if the media has expired using the time recorded on the
20 media and the time the media was inserted into the second gaming device;
means for determining if the media has not expired; and
means for selecting a second encryption key preceding the first encryption key and
a third encryption key following the first encryption key according to the time of day
recorded on the media, and decrypting the information using the second encryption key
25 and the third encryption key if the information cannot be decrypted using the first
encryption key if the media has not expired.

55. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the information further comprises an
identification of the first gaming device.

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